

# Canine Bulletin

Nebraska Task Force - 1

January 2006

## How To Say Goodbye

*Submitted by: Kyle Tjelmaland*

Saying goodbye is never an easy thing to do. Recently Nebraska Task Force 1 has had to say goodbye to one of its oldest and dearest members, Ditto.

Everywhere I go across the country I always hear some sort of story about Ditto and Elaine. The stories range from inspiring, to the consequences when dogs got too close to Ditto. Despite all of the different stories, they all ended in how good Ditto was at her job. Watching her in action was what got me interested in search work. She seemed so fluent and sure of herself. I wanted a dog just like her; smart, good nose, confident, and light on the feet. Of course I went out and got a dog that is big, clumsy, uncoordinated, and only uses his brain as a last resort. Hey, to each his own.

I have a lot of respect for Ditto and owe a lot to Elaine. I have recently certified with my dog and could not have done it without her guidance. Elaine and Ditto have given me so much of their time that I will forever be grateful. There is a saying that I have remembered for years it says, "When you are good you tell other people, when you are great, other people tell you". Well I am telling Elaine and Ditto that they are great and Ditto will be sorely missed. As good as Ditto was at finding things, I have no doubt that she will find her way home. Sometimes I struggle with what to say to a friend for comfort during a loss. A lot of words come to mind, but none seem to do justice. I do not like goodbye, so instead I will say Thank you.



Ditto 1991-2005

## A Newbie's Experiences

*Submitted by: Monica Barger*

I came across this article recently. It is one that I had written shortly after one of my training trips and as I read through it again, I found that it was still pertinent to today's training and goals, so decided to submit it to the newsletter. I hope it helps others in reaching their goals with their canines!

I thought it might be beneficial to others to share my thoughts, experiences and growth in the K-9 search program over this past year from a "newbies" point of view. Zima and I certifying together was a huge accomplishment for me, but I also realized two things after that certification...one being that we had a LOT of work to do to prepare for the advanced test and the second being that I was lost and not at all sure how to go about

preparing for that level of performance for either myself or my canine partner.

I have spent the better part of this past few months traveling to various places for training opportunities. That's one thing I have learned...ultimately, I am responsible for my own education and the training of my dog. So, Zima and I have traveled to Springfield, Columbia, Colorado and California to train.

Elaine has patiently educated us on the ins and outs of the working disaster dog and their handlers, what our responsibilities will be, etc. and all of this came into focus for me as I traveled and trained. The first thing I can say without a doubt is that when dog experiences levels of stress, their performance

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Passing teams from the Type 2 Test Held in California on December 3rd & 4th.

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and drive will diminish. Imagine if you will, a five hour flight into a new location where we meet up with a new acquaintance who takes us to a new rubble pile we've never seen before and we are put to work searching for victims my dog has never met...yes, their performance drops. It became painfully clear to me that what we get at home with our dogs in the way of drive, focus and intensity will never be the ultimate performance on deployment. Expect this to drop when you travel and as you add more variables to your search training, and ultimately, in a real deployment situation, the less your dog may have to give. This can be overcome and compensated for on some level by providing your canine partner with the opportunities to experience levels of stress incorporated into their training. Travel when you can...expose your dog to new sights, sounds and environments. Remember to start back a couple of levels to make your dog successful whenever you enter a new environment. Allow your dog some time to acclimate to the environment before you start your training. Take the responsibility to make your dog's training experience a positive one by being aware of what your dog needs in various training situations and take responsibility upon yourself to provide this for your canine partner. Happy Training!

## How Do I Submit Items for the Canine Bulletin

Mail, E-mail, or Fax items to:

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